

Ryan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Ryan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in honoring Ryan Donaldson for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

COMMODITY MARKETS TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 6604, the Commodity Markets Transparency and Accountability Act.

As chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have held two hearings on excessive speculation and its effect on energy prices.

We learned that in 2000, physical hedgers—businesses like trucking companies, airlines, and other industries that need to hedge to ensure a stable price for fuel in future months—accounted for 63 percent of the oil futures market.

Today, physical hedgers only control 19 percent of the market. Approximately 81 percent of the market has been taken over by swap dealers and speculators, a considerable majority of whom have no physical stake in the market.

Since the Enron loophole became law in 2000, there has been a dramatic shift as physical hedgers continually represent a smaller portion of the market. This excessive speculation is a significant factor in the price Americans are paying for gasoline, diesel, and home heating oil.

Just yesterday, JP Morgan's global chief investment officer, Michael Cembalest, wrote: "there was an enormous amount of speculation pent up in energy markets * * * and it wasn't just the supply-demand equation. Oil will rise again, and we need solutions to energy supplies, but \$140 in July 2008 was ridiculous." Even the speculators admit they're inflating energy prices.

Last week, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, CFTC, released a report that it claims shows that speculators are not affecting prices.

However, CFTC even admits in its own report: "This preliminary survey is not able to accurately answer and quantify the amount of speculative trading occurring in the futures markets."

How can the CFTC tell Congress that speculation is not a problem if they can't even tell us how much speculation is occurring? This is a study that made its conclusions before it had the facts to back them up.

I encourage Members and those watching at home to go to the website: accidentalhuntbrothers.com. On this website is a report by Michael Masters, 1 of 11 witnesses who testified at our June 2008 O&I hearing.

This report shows what my colleagues and I have been saying for a long time. The price of oil has become completely detached from supply and demand fundamentals.

As the report shows, it's very simple: When index speculators pour large amounts of money into commodities markets, prices go up. When these same speculators pull their money out, prices go down.

As you can see in this chart, from January through May 2008, index speculators poured more than \$60 billion into commodities, causing crude oil prices to increase \$33 a barrel.

Then, starting on July 15, 2008, index speculators reduced their investments by \$39 billion, causing prices to decrease by about \$29 a barrel.

Even more startling, index speculators completely ignored supply and demand signals.

During the first 3 months of 2008, index speculators bet on high energy prices when the Energy Information Agency, EIA, forecast increasing supply, which should mean lower prices.

In July, when EIA forecast that demand would exceed supply, a sign that oil prices should go up, index speculators began to pull \$39 billion out of the market.

Today, we face hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, civil war in Nigeria, OPEC considering production cuts, the situation in Georgia, and continuing violence in the Middle East. In the past, each of these events would have sent crude oil prices through the roof.

However, because speculators have been pulling their money out of the market, crude oil is at \$91.49 a barrel. This is \$53.67 lower than it was just 2 months ago.

If there is anyone that can show me any reason, other than speculators pulling out of these markets, that the price of crude oil should drop \$53 in 2 months, I'd like to see it.

While the Peterson bill may not have everything that I've called for in my legislation, the Prevent Unfair Manipulation of Prices, PUMP, Act, it does take significant steps to rein in excessive speculation.

The bill would strengthen position limits on regulated markets, and establish an advisory board to set position limits while still protecting physical hedgers. It addresses the foreign boards of trade loophole, and properly limits the bona fide hedging exemption to physical hedgers.

The legislation would improve the information available to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, significantly improving CFTC's ability to monitor energy markets. And, should the CFTC find excessive speculation on unregulated markets as a result, CFTC can take the steps necessary to correct it.

I was proud to support this legislation in July, when it should have passed. Unfortunately, 16 of my Republican colleagues decided to change their vote, playing politics instead of providing relief to Americans facing high energy prices.

While it has not been the only factor, speculators have seen that Congress is serious about acting to curb excessive speculation, and the markets are responding accordingly.

I urge members to continue their support for H.R. 6604, so we can continue to show speculators that Congress is serious about protecting American consumers.

I thank Chairman PETERSON and his staff for working with me and my colleagues to produce this legislation. I urge my colleagues

to vote for H.R. 6604, the Commodity Markets Transparency and Accountability Act, to rein in excessive speculation and provide your constituents with relief from high gas prices.

HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, AND CORRUPTION IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise before you today to voice my concern over the current situation in Kazakhstan in spite of the Kazakhstan government's pledge to reform in areas of human rights, democracy and corruption. Kazakhstan was selected to hold the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, and thus it is required to uphold the standards of this organization in the fields stated above. So far, Kazakhstan has failed to do so.

Kazakhstan's government ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2006; it signed the Optional Protocol to ICCPR and the Optional Protocol to the U.N. Convention Against Torture (CAT) in 2007, and it has introduced some reform to the criminal justice system. In this, Kazakhstan should be applauded. However, the government has made almost no concrete progress toward implementing these pledges. As Human Rights Watch argued, "Kazakhstan is not a country with frequent or dramatic government crackdown on freedoms and human rights. One finds rather an atmosphere of quiet, subtle repression."

This "subtle repression" can be seen by the government's failure to heed the concerns of local human rights groups that have been advocating for reforms such as the review of legislation on freedom of assembly, improvements in the prison system, abolition of the death penalty, reform of the judicial system and legislation to guarantee an independent judiciary, and ensuring accountability for torture. While Kazakhstan's government is about to chair OSCE, it has resisted implementing meaningful reforms in these areas. As Dr. Andrea Berg, a Central Asia Researcher, testified to Human Rights Watch: "The government [of Kazakhstan] has certainly created a difficult environment for the exercise and promotion of human rights that is out of line with the OSCE standards and far less than what one would expect of the leadership of an organization grounded in human right principles."

Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, has been in power since 1989. He has never been elected in a vote judged free and fair by the OSCE. Ironically, last year the OSCE described a Kazakh parliamentary poll, in which a presidential party won all the seats in the lower house, as being below the required standards. While Nazarbayev is credited for bringing stability to Kazakhstan, it has come at a price, with a weak and fragmented opposition that has called on the government to reform the election and media laws and to ease restriction on public meetings. During the most recent elections, in August 2007, opposition candidates did not win a single seat.

There is a reason for the weakness of any political opposition in Kazakhstan: Since 2002,

for a political party to come into existence, the party must have an initial conference of 1,000 persons representing two-thirds of the regions of Kazakhstan and a membership of 50,000. The OSCE, the same organization that Kazakhstan will head in the near future, denounced the restrictiveness of this law and predicted that it would have "a chilling effect on the development of political pluralism in Kazakhstan."

The media, a tool of the utmost importance in any democracy, has been dominated in Kazakhstan by government loyalists, while independent journalists are threatened and harassed for criticizing the president for government policies and practices. This, no doubt, has enhanced Nazarbayev's hold on power.

As for corruption, Kazakhstan regularly ranks close to the bottom internationally. In 2007, Kazakhstan was ranked 150 out of 179 countries by "Transparency International" league table. As a United Nations report on Kazakhstan's corruption so eloquently put it: "Corruption undermines the democratic development, performance of State institutions, and efficient use of resources. Eventually, it undermines development of society, especially of its most vulnerable groups."

So why should we care? Is it because Kazakhstan is an oil-rich country? Is it because of its proximity to Russia? Perhaps. We often seem to care more about the fate of any oil-rich country, or any country that delivers oil than countries in a similar plight that do not have oil. But we should also care because we claim to be a country that promotes democracy and human rights, a country that values the individual freedoms of humans, no matter where they live, no matter what natural resources they possess, and no matter what relations they have with the US. How can we lecture the world about abiding to human rights laws, anti-corruption laws, and judicial reform, when we cannot look straight at our friend's face and say: "For the sake of your own people, for the sake of your region, you need to do better." And now, more than ever, before it takes the Chairmanship position of the OSCE, it must reform.

HONORING CAMERON CROOKS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Cameron Crooks of Kansas City, Missouri. Cameron is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1374, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Cameron has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Cameron has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Cameron Crooks for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO CRAIG RHODES

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize the retirement of Craig Rhodes, park officer and maintenance supervisor for the Marshall County Conservation Board, and to express my appreciation for his 37 years of public service to his community.

Craig began as a seasonal employee in the summers of 1969 and 1970 with the Marshall County Conservation Board. In 1971, he applied for a maintenance position that opened up and was offered the position. Craig kept the area parks, wildlife areas, prairies, river access sites and trails maintained for the public use. During his years at the Conservation Board, Craig's hard work has earned him respect and appreciation from citizens and visitors around the region.

I commend Craig Rhodes for his many years of loyalty and service to his fellow Iowans. It is an honor to represent Craig in the United States Congress, and I know my colleagues join me in wishing him a happy and healthy retirement.

HONORING TIM MOREHOUSE

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, Tim Morehouse combines the discipline of an Olympic medalist with the generosity of spirit that makes him a teacher in one of our poorer neighborhoods.

As a member of the United States sabre team, Tim won a Silver Medal at the Beijing Olympics.

He began fencing in seventh grade at Riverdale Country Day School, and switched to the sabre from the foil in the eighth grade. His skill got him recruited by Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. There he became one of the top college fencers in the country, qualifying for the NCAA championships three times.

At Brandeis, Tim was a history major and served as a resident adviser for 2 years. After graduating, he became a part of Teach for America, an education consortium that aims to bridge the achievement gap between different socio-economic groups. Morehouse went to Intermediate School 90 in Washington Heights as a 7th-grade English and social studies teacher.

As a former teacher I am proud of Tim Morehouse for his abilities as an Olympian, but even more so for his dedication to helping others. He is an example of the scholar-athlete who, having achieved his goals, then helps others to achieve theirs.

We are proud of Tim Morehouse. To be an Olympian takes dedication and training, and a lot of both. It takes a different kind of dedication to devote your life to helping others. I congratulate Tim for being superb on both counts.

CONGRATULATING HURST MAIN POST OFFICE AS A VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM STAR SITE

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Hurst Main Post Office for being certified as a Star site in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, Voluntary Protection Program, VPP. The Hurst Main Post Office is one of three postal VPP sites in the Fort Worth area.

The Voluntary Protection Program promotes success through effective worksite safety and health. Approval into the Voluntary Protection Program is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's way of officially recognizing the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who uphold exemplary occupational safety practices.

The distinction as a "Star" site displays Hurst Main Post Office's sustained excellence in all areas of safety and health management systems. This excellence stems from strong leadership, participation, and commitment to quality.

I commend the Hurst Main Post Office upon their receipt of this distinction for their commitment to exercising safe and healthful working conditions. Their efforts serve as an example to all, and I am proud to be their representative in the 26th District of Texas.

HONORING MAXWELL BOWERS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Maxwell Bowers of Kearney, Missouri. Maxwell is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 1397, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Maxwell has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Maxwell has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Maxwell Bowers for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

TRIBUTE TO NAVY COMMANDER DAVID ASJES

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 22, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Navy Commander David Asjes of Ames, Iowa as a recipient of a Bronze Star